



## United Nations Association

### London & South East Region

From: The Policy Conference Chair,  
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The Rt Hon David Lammy, M.P.,  
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs  
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AH  
United Kingdom

11<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Dear David Lammy.

### **The views of UNA members and supporters in London and the South East**

You will be aware of the work of the United Nations Association which, since 1945, has advocated for UK action on global cooperation, a stronger UN and a better world. UNA-UK seeks to build movements (such as the 1 in 8 billion campaign), provide expert input and design campaigns dedicated to promoting human rights, peace and security, and systematic transformation at the UN.

I write to you as Chair of the Policy Conference of the London & South East Region of UNA to share the policy resolutions adopted on the 15<sup>th</sup> March and subsequently on 30<sup>th</sup> March ([copy attached](#)). Amongst the many issues we discussed, perhaps the most urgent are Aid funding, Ukraine, Israel/Palestine and the Middle East and the conflict in Sudan.

On **Aid** the sudden withdrawal of **USAID funds, platforms and expertise (resolution 18)** is devastating: to millions of people in desperate situations suddenly left without support; to many NGOs who have supported them and advocated for sustainable solutions to development challenges; and to many vital parts of the UN system. But the UK government's subsequent decision to cut our own Aid to pay for defence spending (**UK Aid Budget resolution 17**) leaves us with fewer resources and less moral authority to lead any sort of rescue of USAID projects and platforms.

This poses a major threat to the substance and credibility of the global rules based order and multilateral cooperation, offers great opportunities to strategic competitors and will increase poverty, conflict, migration and instability.

In our resolution, we call for a reversal of the UK decision and attempts to encourage a re-think in the US. We also call for the UK to recommit to multilateralism and the global rules-based system for a public recognition of the relationships between international aid, UK security and prosperity.

On USAID we call for all UN member states (including the UK) to work together to fund urgent priorities, meet their existing UN commitments in full and not seek any rebates arising from underspending on existing programmes as the UN seeks to respond to this crisis.

On UK Aid we also propose a series of immediate steps to maximise the financial sustainability of developing countries in the circumstances - ranging from “tax for development” initiatives, to using trade policies and encouraging diaspora funding. We also propose the removal of various commitments from the Aid budget so that it can remain focussed on where it is most needed (including the poorest countries) and to protect vital UN agencies. We urge the speeding up of asylum seeker processing and giving asylum seekers the opportunity to work to contribute to costs and for their own wellbeing.

On **Ukraine (resolution 16)** we welcome the careful work of the UK government to build a coalition of support for a sustainable peace and to press the US for security guarantees for Ukraine. We encourage further steps to put economic pressure on Russia (including on frozen assets) now, and the preparation of longer term plan (with carrots and sticks) to drive non-interference and respect for the sovereignty of neighbouring states by Russia.

We encourage the use of UN’s negotiating skills and experience and drawing upon the emphasis on sovereignty in the African peace initiative and the clarity about nuclear issues, civilian infrastructure and global food security in China and Brazil’s proposal. For good order globally, as well as justice for Ukraine, we believe that taking territory by force needs to have consequences including effective sanctions on the exploitation of any assets gained, and redress for the victims of confiscation. There should also be full legal accountability for all those responsible for war-crimes.

On Israel/Palestine we divide our resolutions into long term issues largely arising from the Occupation (***Israel/Palestine 100 years after the Balfour Declaration, resolution 4***), and Israel’s response to the more immediate events following the atrocities of October 7<sup>th</sup> (***Israel/Palestine latest developments, resolution 5***).

On the long term we conclude that UK needs to work with others for a speedy end to the Occupation as part of our responsibilities under the ICJ’s recent advisory ruling. We believe the time has come (we propose in co-ordination with France) to recognise Palestine. There needs to be a renewed focus on the rights of Palestinians (whatever the constitutional solution), and the prevention of their relocation across Israel and the OPT or confiscation of their land or property.

On the immediate crisis we welcome the timely support of the UK government for the Arab League Gaza Plan. We encourage further steps to build momentum behind it as the model to rebuild Gaza, rather than illegal plans for forced removals and the appropriation of people’s land. We advocate urgent compliance with international obligations and humanitarian law by Israel in Gaza, including the provision of aid and the respect for civilian infrastructure. We conclude that the provision of military support to Israel and trading with illegal settlements should cease until Israel complies with these obligations.

In support of free speech on these issues in the UK, we also commend the clarity of the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism in drawing a line between antisemitism and legitimate discussion or criticism of the actions of the Israeli government.

Our resolution on **Peaceful coexistence in the Middle East (resolution 8)** calls for a regional strategy that encompasses a renewed settlement with Iran and normalisation of relations with Israel alongside the peaceful resolution of the multiple conflicts with Israel on the basis of respect for international law and pre-existing borders; assisting the people of Syria and Lebanon to determine their own future; and the provision of humanitarian relief where needed for displaced people through UNRWA and otherwise.

On **Sudan (resolution 13)** we commend both the aid and the vital diplomatic work undertaken by the UK government to put the focus on the terrible suffering of civilians. We urge you to continue to advocate for at the UN notwithstanding the Russian veto. We call on the UN to find pathways to peace in co-operation with the African Union and by opposing the flow of weapons to the factions involved.

Our Policy Conference also agreed a number of other resolutions based on regional working groups or local group activities:

- (a) **Accountability for the use of the UN Security Council Veto (resolution 1)** proposes a modest evolution of existing principles to tackle the widely recognised challenge of unaccountable use of the veto that weakens the Security Council's effectiveness;
- (b) On **Protection of Minorities in India (resolution 10)** we were mindful of the challenge that action by the UK as the former colonial power could be counterproductive or misconstrued. But we also felt that the discrimination and violence facing minorities urgently needs to be addressed, particularly as the UK is working to strengthen bilateral relationships with India for other reasons. Our proposed solution is to focus on supporting the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review recommendations and to encourage robust monitoring of the implementation of these recommendations;
- (c) On **Sustainability in Mountain Areas (resolution 14)** we call for the UK to join the UN's Mountains Partnership to work with and learn from other mountain areas in tackling the challenges of sustainability and livelihoods in mountain areas in the UK and globally; and in maintaining their essential contribution to water supply, biodiversity and climate action for all.

We have also updated:

- **Climate (resolution 2)** with regard to COP 30 and adding calls on our own National Adaptation Programme and the UK Led Clean power Alliance;
- **Cybersecurity & Cybercrime (resolution 3)** to include recent positive developments at the UN and encourage support for the UN's efforts across cybersecurity, cybercrime and enhancing the ability of governments to keep up with the development of AI;
- **Nuclear Weapons (resolution 6)** calling for a reconsideration in the defence review and the inclusion of pathways to reduce and phase out such weapons in negotiations together with a more constructive approach to the TPNW particularly in view of the heightened proliferation risks arising from current global uncertainties;
- **Our World after the Pandemic (resolution 7)** emphasising the continued high risk of future pandemics, the challenges of the USA's planned withdrawal from WHO and the need to conclude and act upon the new Pandemic Treaty;
- **Protection of Journalists (resolution 9)** responding to the latest disturbing trends in targeting, imprisoning and hostage taken of journalists which threaten the free flow of accurate information and of ideas and which need to be robustly challenged, including by all UN members states implementing the relevant UN Plan of Action;
- **Second Voluntary National Review of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (resolution 11)** calling for a more inclusive National Review, a whole of government action plan, encouragement for Local Voluntary Reviews and the promotion of the relevant International Standards Organisation (ISO) standard to help organisations contribute to the successful realisation of the SDGs;

- **Sri Lanka (resolution 12)** where important unresolved post conflict work remains to be done despite the change of government;
- **Treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and Europe (resolution 15)** where we have welcomed the abandonment of the Rwanda scheme, but reinforced our call for more safe routes from major areas of conflict or persecution. We continue to highlight calls for a more humanitarian approach and an end to immigration status challenges in the NHS which in practice impedes healthcare for asylum seekers, refugees and others; and
- **Yemen (resolution 19)** where restoring aid and a continued focus on resolving this conflict to overcome years of terrible civilian suffering should not be derailed by the consequences of recent attacks on Red Sea Shipping and on Israel (which we deeply regret), and where we should not be supplying weapons that could be used in further violations of international humanitarian law.

The London & South East Region speaks for itself in these matters and is not claiming to represent the views of UNA UK nationally. We would nonetheless welcome your response to the various issues and calls for government action in the enclosed. We plan to share your response with UNA members and supporters in London & the South East as we have done with FCDO responses in the past (including on our website) to encourage further debate and discussion, including with local MPs.

We greatly look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Webster', with a horizontal line underneath.

Peter Webster  
Chair, UNA London & South East Region Policy Conference